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Application for Letters Patent

Of

Paul Phillip Ratmansky

And

Joel David Ratmansky.

For

Sports Memorabilia Apparatus

Send Correspondence to:

**Robert J. Yarbrough, Esq.
Attorney at Law
201 North Jackson Street
Media, PA 19063**

**(610) 891-0668 (voice)
(610) 891-0655 (fax)
ID# 42241
Express Mail No. EU887666128US**

SPORTS MEMORABILIA APPARATUS**Related Applications**

This application is entitled to priority from
Provisional Application 60/417,759, filed October 11, 2002
5 by Paul Phillip Ratmansky and Joel David Ratmansky,
inventors.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**Field of the Invention**

The invention is a sports memorabilia apparatus. The
10 sports memorabilia of the Invention relates specifically to
the sport of ice hockey. The apparatus generally comprises
an ice hockey puck releasably receiving for display a
medallion.

Description of the Related Art

15 Sports memorabilia are popular among collectors and
fans. In addition to the baseball cards and autographed
baseballs of the past, collectors and fans are interested
in many items bearing the logo of a favorite team or the
name of a favorite player. For example a reproduction
20 hockey jersey bearing the name and number of a popular
player is much sought after by fans.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention extends the range of
collectables for the sport of ice hockey. The Invention

comprises a hockey puck. A cavity appears in the hockey puck and a medallion composed of a precious metal or other material is inserted into the cavity. Indicia appear on the medallion embossed by conventional minting or coining technology. The indicia may comprise a team or league logo, the image of a player, trophy or stadium, a motto, or any other indicia. The medallion is removable from the cavity in the puck and one medallion may be changed for another by the collector.

10 Means are presented to allow the medallions to be removably retained in the cavity, comprising configurations of a hockey puck or a retaining member adapted to be inserted into the hockey puck and to receive a variety of medallions. The means for releasably retaining the
15 medallion allow the force exerted upon the medallion to be pre-selected and allow the surface area of the puck or of the retaining member in contact with the medallion to be pre-selected. The means for releasably retaining the medallion in the cavity therefore allow the ease or
20 difficulty of removing and replacing the medallion to be pre-selected. The surface area in contact with the medallion and the force exerted on the medallion by the puck or the retaining member are selected so that the

medallion is securely retained in the cavity for display but may be readily removed by the collector.

Display means for the hockey puck and medallion also are included as a part of the disclosure.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a hockey puck and medallion combination.

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a medallion.

Fig. 3 is a perspective view of a hockey puck prepared to 10 accept the medallion.

Fig. 4 is a perspective view of a hockey puck combined with a plurality of medallions.

Fig. 5 is a cross section view showing a puck with a medallion on both flat sides of the puck.

15 Fig. 6 is a cross section view showing a first means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 7 is a cross section view showing a second means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

20 Fig. 8 is a cross section view showing a third means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 9 is a detail of a perspective cross section showing a fourth means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 10 is a detail of a perspective cross section showing a fifth means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 11 is a detail of a perspective cross section showing a sixth means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 12 is a plan view of a seventh means for releasably retaining the medallion in the puck.

5 Fig. 13 is a plan view of an eighth means for releasably retaining the medallion in the puck

Fig. 14 is a cross section view showing a ninth means for retaining the medallion in the puck.

10 Fig. 15 shows a retaining member for holding the medallion in the puck.

Fig. 16 is a cross section of the retaining member and puck with the medallion removed.

Fig. 17 is a perspective view of the retaining member and puck with the medallion removed.

15 Fig. 18 is a perspective view of the retaining member.

Fig. 17 is a cross section of a resilient retaining member.

Fig. 19 is a perspective exploded view of the apparatus including a resilient retaining member.

20 Fig. 20 is an additional means for attaching a medallion to a puck.

Fig. 21 is perspective view of a means for displaying the medallion and puck.

Fig. 22 is a perspective view of a reverse side 48 of a puck of the Invention.

Fig. 23 is a tenth means for releasably retaining the medallion in a puck.

DESCRIPTION OF AN EMBODIMENT

Fig. 1 illustrates the Invention. An ice hockey puck 2 has inset into its surface a medallion 4. Medallion 4 bears indicia 6. The indicia 6 are embossed onto the display surface 8 of the medallion 4 using conventional minting or coining technology, including impact or pressure technologies such as knuckle presses or hydraulic presses.

10 Alternatively, any means known in the art may be used to impart indicia 6 to medallion 4, including without limitation printing, coating, painting, engraving, ablating, welding, depositing, carving, turning, milling, cutting, laser cutting, casting and molding. Indicia 6 may appear on both sides of the medallion 4 and different indicia 6 may be used for each side. The indicia 6 preferably are designs, such as a relief design, impressed into the surface of medallion 4. Indicia 6 preferably relates to the sport of ice hockey. Indicia 6 may comprise

15 anything in which a hockey fan or collector of hockey memorabilia might take an interest, such as a team or league logo, the likeness of a place or person, the date of a victory or tournament, the likeness of a trophy or prize, or any other indicia 6.

Medallion 4 may be composed of a precious metal, but any material for medallion 4 is contemplated by the invention. For example, medallion 4 may be composed of wood, ceramic, synthetic plastics, or any other material.

5 While embossing using minting technology is preferred, the invention contemplates any method for imparting indicia 6 to the medallion 4.

The puck 2 is comprised generally of a somewhat resilient material, such as a hard rubber. The puck 2 may 10 be a new puck 2 approved for play by the applicable hockey league. The puck 2 may be one that has had specific uses, such as a puck 2 used in practice by a specific team or player, a puck 2 used in a game, or a puck 2 used in a tournament. The puck 2 may be one handled by a particular 15 player.

Pucks 2 and medallions 4 may be offered in specific series, such as the practice series, game series and tournament series using practice pucks 2, game pucks 2 and tournament pucks 2, respectively.

20 The puck 2 may be a facsimile of a league-approved hockey puck 2 produced specifically for the purpose of displaying the medallions 4 of the Invention. The materials from which the puck 2 is composed may be selected to properly retain the medallion 4 in the puck 4 while

allowing the fan or collector of memorabilia to remove readily the medallion 4 at will.

Fig. 2 shows a medallion 4 removed from puck 2. As shown by Fig. 3, a cavity 12 is prepared in puck 2 to 5 receive medallion 4. The cavity 12 releasably retains medallion 4. The fan or collector may remove the medallion 4 at any time and replace the medallion 4 in puck 2 with another medallion 4, thereby allowing the fan or collector to display multiple medallions 4 without also displaying 10 multiple pucks 2.

As shown by Fig. 4, each puck 2 alternatively may display a plurality of medallions 4, each bearing indicia 6. For example, a large medallion 4 may connote a hockey team and each small medallion 11 may connote a victory of 15 the team, or a starting player on the team.

Medallions 4 may be displayed on each of the flat sides of the puck 2, as shown by Fig. 5. In figure 5, a medallion 4 appears on one side of puck 2. Another medallion 4 appears on the reverse side 48 of puck 2. For 20 example, a medallion 4 on a first side of puck 2 may bear indicia indicating a team and a medallion 4 on the reverse side 48 of puck 2 may bear indicia indicating a player.

The medallion 4 may be released from the puck 2 by the fan or collector so that another medallion 4 may be

inserted in the puck 2. Fig. 6 illustrates a first means for releasably holding medallion 4 by puck 2. The cavity 12 (Fig. 3) may be cut or molded into the puck 2. Cavity 12 has interior surface 14 that is perpendicular to the 5 sides of the puck 2. The medallion 2 has an exterior surface 10 (Fig. 2) that is perpendicular to the display surface 8 of the medallion 2. The exterior surface 10 of the medallion 4 engages the interior surface 14 of cavity 12 with a sliding fit, so that medallion 4 is retained in 10 puck 2 during ordinary handling. Tolerances and construction of puck 2 and medallion 4 may be set during manufacture so that the fan or collector may easily release 15 medallion 4 from puck 2, may release medallion 4 with difficulty from puck 2 or may not release medallion 4 from puck 2.

The first means for retaining the medallion 4 by puck 2 (Fig. 6) requires close tolerances between interior surface 14 of cavity 12 and exterior surface 10 of medallion 4 for a proper fit. Fig. 7 provides a second 20 means for retaining medallion 4. Interior surface 14 of cavity 12 is sloped so that the opening of cavity 12 is smaller than the base of cavity 12. The purpose of the sloped interior surface 14 is to reduce the area of interior surface 14 in contact with medallion 4 while

nonetheless providing positive retention of medallion 4.

The resilient nature of the rubber puck 2 allows the puck 2 to be deformed and the medallion 4 to be removed. The slope of interior surface 14 shown in Fig. 7 is exaggerated for clarity.

Fig. 8 shows a third means for retaining the medallion 4 in the puck 2. Interior surface 14 may define a high point 18 engaging the exterior surface 10 of medallion 4.

As in Fig. 7, the purpose of the interior surface 14 configuration of Fig. 8 is to reduce the surface area of interior surface 14 in contact with medallion 4 while providing positive retention of medallion 4. The resilient nature of puck 2 allows a collector to deform puck 2, thereby deforming interior surface 14 and releasing medallion 4.

Figs. 9-11 show fourth, fifth and sixth means for releasably retaining medallion 4 in cavity 12. In each of the means illustrated by Figs. 9-11, the area of interior surface 14 of cavity 12 in contact with exterior surface 10 of medallion 4 is reduced. Fig. 9 illustrates vertical slots 20 normal to the display surface 16 of puck 2 appearing in interior surface 14 of cavity 12. Fig. 10 illustrates horizontal slots 22 appearing in interior surface 14 of cavity 12. Fig. 11 illustrates protuberances

24 extending toward the center of puck 2 and defining interior surface 14.

Figs. 6-11 show alternative designs for the interior surface 14 of cavity 12 that retain medallion 4 by 5 compressing the resilient material from which puck 2 is formed. A common element shared by the alternatives illustrated by Figs. 6-11 is that the amount of force exerted by the resilient material of puck 2 against medallion 4 may be adjusted by adjusting during the 10 manufacturing process the amount of resilient material that will be compressed by medallion 4 when medallion 4 and puck 2 are engaged.

Fig. 12 shows a seventh alternative means for retaining medallion 4 in cavity 12. In the alternative 15 means illustrated by Fig. 12, arms 26 are formed of the resilient material during manufacture of puck 2. Engagement of medallion 4 by puck 2 flexes, rather than compresses, arms 26. The force exerted by arms 26 on the external surface 10 of medallion 4 is pre-selected by 20 determining the number, dimensions, and material from which the arms 26 are composed.

Fig. 13 shows an eighth alternative means for retaining medallion 4 in cavity 12 that may be used in conjunction with any of the other means for retaining the

medallion 4. The number of points of contact 28 between the interior surface 14 of cavity 12 and exterior surface 10 of medallion 4 may be selected to accurately locate medallion 4 with respect to puck 2 and to securely retain 5 medallion 4. The number of points of contact 28 illustrated by Fig. 13 is three, though other values for the number of points of contact 28 may be used.

Fig. 14 shows a ninth means for releasably retaining medallion 4 in puck 2. In Fig. 14, one of the hook or the 10 loop of hook-and-loop fastener 30 (such as Velcro™) is attached to the medallion 4 and the other of the hook or the loop is attached to the puck 2. Engagement of the hooks and loops of the hook-and-loop fastener 30 retains medallion 4, but allows medallion 4 to be released. The 15 retention means illustrated by Fig. 12 does not depend on the resilient nature of the puck 2 for release of the medallion 4.

Figs. 13-16 illustrate a tenth means for retaining medallion 4 in puck 2 utilizing a retaining member 32 20 having springs 34. Fig. 13 shows the puck 2, retaining member 32 and medallion 4 assembly. Fig. 14 shows the puck 2 and retaining member 32 with medallion 4 removed. Fig. 15 is a perspective view of the puck 2 and retaining member

32, while Fig. 16 is a perspective view of the retaining member 32 alone.

Retaining member 32 has an outer body 36 (Fig. 16) and a plurality of springs 34 (Figs. 14-16). Outer body 36 of 5 retaining member 32 engages interior surface 14 of cavity 12 of puck 2 in an interference fit, the interior surface 14 thereby retaining the retaining member 14. Exterior surface 10 of medallion 4 engages the plurality of springs 34, retaining medallion 4 within the retaining member 32 10 and therefore within puck 2. The number and spring rate of springs 34 is selected so that medallion 4 is retained within retaining member 32 in normal handling, but so that medallion 4 can be removed and replaced by the collector.

Figs. 17 and 18 illustrate an eleventh means for 15 retaining medallion 4 in puck 2 utilizing a resilient retaining member 38. Fig. 18 is an exploded view showing puck 2, resilient retaining member 38 and medallion 4. Fig. 17 is a cross section view showing the puck 2 engaging the resilient retaining member 38 and the resilient 20 retaining member 38 engaging the medallion 4. Compression of the resilient material of which the resilient retaining member 38 is composed holds the medallion 4 in place.

Fig. 19 shows a twelfth means for attaching a medallion 4 to a puck 2. An adhesive layer 40 bonds to puck 2 and bonds to medallion 4, securing medallion 4.

Fig. 20 shows a means for displaying the puck 2 and 5 medallion 4 assembly. A pin 42 is supported by base 44. Pin 42 in turn engages a corresponding hole in puck 2, thereby supporting puck 2 and medallion 4.

From Fig. 21, secondary indicia 46 may appear on puck 2 to render the puck 2 and medallion 4 combination more 10 desirable to a fan or collector. For example, secondary indicia 46 may appear on the reverse side 48 of puck 2. Secondary indicia 46 may take the form of, for example, an autograph by a player. Such an autograph could be either placed on the puck 2 by the player or printed on the puck 2 15 using conventional printing means. Any secondary indicia 46 may be selected and secondary indicia 46 may appear anywhere on the puck 2, medallion 4, base 44 or pin 42.

Fig. 22 illustrates a tenth alternative means for releasably retaining medallion 4 in puck 2. Exterior 20 surface 14 of cavity 12 is relieved so that exterior surface 14 slopes outward. The slope of exterior surface 14 is exaggerated in Fig. 22 for clarity. The difference in diameter between the inner and outer portions of

exterior surface 14 may be on the order of thousandths of an inch.

In describing the above embodiments of the invention, specific terminology was selected for the sake of clarity.

5 However, the invention is not intended to be limited to the specific terms so selected, and it is to be understood that each specific term includes all technical equivalents that operate in a similar manner to accomplish a similar purpose.